

# Woolcott Casestudy

## Background

Woolcott, a research and engagement agency, asked Lumi to help it generate feedback from the customers of a water services company in a customer engagement forum.

The agency has developed a “deliberative engagement” approach for public and private sector consultations, which can involve the public, service users, customers, community groups, staff, opinion leaders and other stakeholders. It can take three forms:

- Juries – usually 12-16 people meeting for a number of days; expert witnesses are called to provide detailed information and can be cross-examined.
- Summits – large scale events of up to 1000 participants; one venue or several venues linked by video conferencing.
- Forums – 50-200 people, convened for ½ -2 days; information input, breakout groups and plenary sessions; voting on key issues.

## In-depth consideration

In this case, Woolcott used the forum approach, giving participants the time and the information that they needed to consider the issues in depth, to make the required trade-offs and to reach considered outcomes. Some 50-80 people convened (anonymously) for three to six half-day sessions.

The aim of the consultation was to balance the water services company's need to invest in infrastructure, operations and maintenance with the need to keep price increases for customers to a minimum. The company considered it vital to involve the local community every step of the way in the development of its future plans, to make sure that its business decisions were informed by what was important to the community.

## Instant engagement

The company told Woolcott what they wanted to discuss, in three different phases during 2018. In each forum, every participant was given a Connector keypad so that during the table discussions and voting sessions, they could instantly engage with the presentations and have their say on a range of questions that presenters put to the forum.

The questions were presented in survey format, allowing participants instant feedback and visibility on the process. The keypads also enabled the presenters to add questions to the presentations or amend them quickly and without fuss.

Vote results were displayed in a clear, easy to understand format using graphs and percentages, allowing participants to digest the results and discuss them with the Woolcott team if anything was unclear. However, the water services company also had experts on-hand to help out with any technical questions.

This was a process in which there were no right or wrong answers, so people were free to express their views, and thanks to Lumi's Connector keypads, everyone was able to be fully engaged, express their views and see the results of the consultations quickly.

